

Seabee Days brings wealth of fun to thousands



Top Left: Children slide down the super slide at the Seabee Days carnival. Below left: One of the competitors for the motorcycle show. Top center: USS Stetham (DDG 63) arrives at NBVC Port Hueneme for Seabee Days. Above: Capt. James Cowell presents a gift to the Seabee Days 2002 featured speaker, Wayne Army, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment. Right: Members of the Santa Barbara band Dishwalla, the featured performers at Seabee Days, head out after their performance to see the sights of the Navy's combat-skilled construction force, the Seabees!

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PORT HUENEME, Calif. - More than 35,000 people turned out for the 16th annual Seabee Days, hosted by Naval Base Ventura County and the 31st Naval Construction Regiment July 27 and 28.

The event kicked off with an opening ceremony and full-dress military parade hosted by Capt. James W. Cowell, Jr., commander, 31st Naval Construction Regiment. "We celebrate Seabees everyday in Port Hueneme, but for the past 16 years we have set aside one weekend in the summer to share our pride with our friends in the surrounding communities," he said.

Ask most any of the visitors at Seabee Days and they will tell you the highlight of the weekend was the parade – or the two ships in port allowing visitors to tour the decks. It was a toss up. "I had no idea the fleet Sailors had so little room on the ships," said Teresa Key, wife of an NMCB-40 Seabee, currently deployed to Guam. "I have a newfound respect for all of the Navy after touring the ship today."

The visiting ships were the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS *Stetham* (DDG 63) and USS *Decatur* (DDG 73).

Cowell said Seabees are trained, ready and capable of performing their 'we build; we fight' mission, but they also like to have fun, which is evident by the many activities scheduled throughout the weekend. "You'll find a huge variety of activities to entertain you this weekend – displays of Seabee construction and weapons, ship tours, and sporting events," he said.

In addition to the activities Cowell talked about in the opening ceremony, Seabee Days also featured a concert by the Santa Barbara band "Dishwalla," a motorcycle and car show, a carnival, and a variety of food and arts and crafts booths for everyone to enjoy.

The weekend also marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Navy's combat skilled construction force. Seabee veterans from as far away as New York and Florida journeyed to Port Hueneme to relive the fun they had here as long ago as 1942.

That fun was evident by all the smiling faces at Seabee Days 2002.

